REMARKS

Claims 1-25, including independent claims 1, 18, 19, 20, and 22, stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious in view of Anderson (U.S. 6,078,892).

Claim 1 is directed to a method for processing customer leads. The method includes routing leads through a lead processing system including hierarchically routing a lead by accepting the lead and then automatically applying one or more global rules to the lead such that the lead is delegated to a first user. A set of rule associated with the first user are then automatically applied to the lead such that the lead is delegated to a second user. The second user is then notified of the lead.

Telephone Interview

On March 4, 2004, Examiners Johnna Stimpak and Tariq Hafiz, and applicant's representatives J. Robin Rohlicek and Mandy Jubang of Fish & Richardson P.C. conducted a telephonic interview. Claim 1 was discussed with respect to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Anderson (U.S. 6,078,892).

The claim language set forth in claim 1 was discussed and the applicant's representatives described how, in one aspect of the invention, a lead is hierarchically routed through the lead management system, such that a single lead ("said lead") is delegated to a first user and then to a second user. Specifically, the lead is delegated to a first user upon application of a set of global rules. The lead is then delegated to a second user upon application of a set of rules associated with the first user. The second user may then be notified of the lead. The examiners recognized that in Anderson, a single lead is not passed to two users in succession. The examiners also identified col. 9, line 18-34 of Anderson as being potentially relevant to the claims. The

examiners and the applicant's representatives agreed that additional language related to

"hierarchical routing" would clarify the claim and more clearly distinguish Anderson.

PTOL-413A

A completed copy of the Applicant Initiated Interview Request Form (PTOL-413A) is

attached to this Amendment.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejections

The applicant first addresses the rejections in the office action dated October 6, 2003.

The office action appears to be matching elements of Anderson to limitations of claim 1 in one

of several possible ways as follows. Claim 1 requires a set of global rules and for some users, a

set of distinct rules associated with each user. If the "information specifying a set of preferences

which correspond to a type of customer the agent would like to solicit" for the various agents in

Anderson corresponds to the recited "set of global rules," then the office action has failed to

point out where Anderson discloses or suggests the recited "distinct sets of rules associated with

each of said users." If on the other hand the "information specifying a set of preferences which

correspond to a type of customer the agent would like to solicit" in Anderson corresponds to set

of distinct rules associated with a user (Anderson's "agent"), then the office action has failed to

point out where Anderson discloses the "set of global rules".

If portions of the "information specifying a set of preferences which correspond to a type

of customer the agent would like to solicit" in Anderson correspond to a "set of global rules" and

other portions correspond with a "set of distinct rules" associated with each user, then the office

action has failed to point out how the distinctions within the "information specifying a set of

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preferences which correspond to a type of customer the agent would like to solicit" in Anderson are made.

Even if Anderson discloses or suggests both the global rules and the distinct sets of rules associated with the users, claim 1 requires more. Claim 1 requires automatically applying one or more global rules to the lead such that the lead is delegated to a first user, automatically applying a set of rule associated with the first user to the lead such that the lead is delegated to a second user, and notifying the second user of the lead. Nowhere does Anderson disclose or suggest such a process that involves delegating a lead to a first user and then delegating the lead to a second user as recited in the claims. Specifically, Anderson makes absolutely no suggestion that a set of rules associated with a first user is applied to the lead resulting in the delegation of the lead to a second user. At most, Anderson discloses applying a set of preferences associated with a first user to the customer records to retrieve those records which match the first user's preferences. Once the first user in Anderson retrieves a lead, that lead is not further processed such that the lead is delegated to another (i.e., a second) user.

Further, even if the "marketing database" in Anderson corresponds to the first user and an "agent" in Anderson corresponds to the second user, Anderson is silent about a lead processing system which accepts the lead and automatically applies one or more global rules to the lead such that the lead is delegated to the marketing database.

The office action acknowledges that Anderson does not teach applying a routing rule such that a second user is delegated to receive the lead. In claim 1, the verb "to delegate" refers to assignment of a lead to a user. Once the lead is delegated to the first user, the set of rules

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associated with that first user are automatically applied to the lead to delegate the lead to a

second user, for example, without the first user's manual intervention. The office action states

that it would have been obvious to route non-selected leads back through the system or have the

non-selected leads be left in the system for selection as opposed to being discarded by the

system, as this would cut down the time it would take to distribute customer leads through the

system to each of the agents. By "non-selected leads," it appears that the office action is

referring to those retrieved leads that match a particular user's preferences, and that are not

subsequently pursued by that user. The applicant fails to see how it would have been obvious to

modify Anderson in the manner suggested by the examiner to obtain the method of claim 1.

Anderson is silent about "hierarchically routing a first lead" as required in claim 1. The

term "hierarchical" appears numerous times in Anderson in the context of a hierarchical

processing of a search request, but these occurrences are not in the context of routing or

delegating of leads. In col. 6, lines 17-38, Anderson discloses an agent formulating a search

request containing a plurality of classes of traits. The search request is processed hierarchically

by the system by first performing a search of the customer records to locate records which

possess a first class of traits. The located records having the first class of traits form a first

collection of records. The system then performs a search of the first collection of records to

locate records which possess a second class of traits. These located records having the second

class of traits form a second collection of records. In col. 9, line 18-34 which was identified by

the examiners during the telephonic interview, Anderson discloses an agent formulating a search

request containing multiple classes of preferences, including a set of mandatory preferences and

a set of desired preferences. Anderson discloses that by designating multiple classes of preferences in a search request, the system allows a user to perform at least two-hierarchical levels of searching to pinpoint those customer prospects most likely to buy the agent's products. No where does Anderson disclose a hierarchical routing of a single lead by delegating the lead to a succession of users. At most, Anderson discloses a hierarchical processing of a single agent's search request based on multiple classes of preferences or traits.

For at least these reasons, the applicant submits that claim 1 and its dependents are allowable over Anderson. Independent claim 18 is allowable over Anderson for at least the same reasons given with respect to claim 1.

Independent claim 19 recites a system for routing leads. The systems includes an engine for applying the plurality of rules to one of the leads and for hierarchically routing said lead to a succession of users according to those rules.

As previously discussed, Anderson does not disclose a hierarchical routing of a single lead to a first user, then a second user, much less a hierarchical routing of a single lead to a succession of users. For at least this reason, the applicant submits that claim 19 is allowable over Anderson.

Independent claim 20 recites a system for processing customer leads. The system includes a first server including an engine for applying the plurality of rules to one of the leads and for hierarchically routing said lead to a succession of users according to said rules.

As previously discussed, Anderson does not disclose a hierarchical routing of a single lead to a first user, then a second user, much less a hierarchical routing of a single lead to a

succession of users. For at least this reason, the applicant submits that claim 20 and its dependent are allowable over Anderson.

Independent claim 22 recites a method for processing customer leads. The method includes hierarchically routing a lead by accepting said lead at the first server, applying a routing rule to said lead such that said lead is delegated to a second server, and at the second server routing the lead to a user and notifying said user of said lead.

No where does Anderson disclose a hierarchical routing of a lead by applying a routing rule at a first server to the lead such that the lead is delegated to a second server. At most, Anderson discloses applying a set of preferences associated with a user to the customer records (stored in the marketing database at a first computer) to retrieve (to a second computer) those records which match the user's preferences. Anderson is silent about delegating a lead to a second server. For at least this reason, the applicant submits that claim 22 and its dependents are allowable over Anderson.

Specification

The original specification was submitted with 1½ line spacing as allowed under 37 CFR 1.52(b). A substitute specification is attached to address the examiner's requirement for double spacing of the lines.

Formal Drawings

The applicant submits herewith a set of formal drawings to address the examiner's objections to the drawings submitted with the original specification.

Supplemental Declaration by Inventors

The applicant submits herewith supplemental declarations by inventors Nancy Gilby and

David Tiu to address the un-initialed changes in their addresses in the previously submitted

declaration.

Conclusion

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence

of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or

concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above

may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or

other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as

an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this

paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of

unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Enclosed is a $27.00 check for excess claim fees and a $475.00 check for the Petition for

Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 4|6|04

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Applicant Initiated Interview Request Form

Application No. : **09/575,283**   First Named Applicant: **Charles Evett et al.**

Examiner: **Johnna Stimpak** Art unit: **3623**   Status of Application: **Pending**

Tentative Participants:
(1) J. Robin Rohlicek (43, 349)   **(2)** Mandy Jubang (45,884)
(3) Examiner Johnna Stimpak   **(4)** Examiner Tariq Hafiz

Proposed Date of Interview: March 4, 2004   **Proposed Time:** 9am

Type of Interview Requested:
(1) ☒ **Telephonic**   **(2)** ☐ **Personal**   **(3)** ☐ **Video Conference**

Exhibit To Be Shown or Demonstrated: ☐ YES   ☒ NO
if yes, provide brief description:

Issues To Be Discussed

Issues (Rej., Obj., etc)	Claims Fig. #s	Prior Art	Discussed	Agreed	Not Agreed
(1) Rej. 103(a)	1	Anderson	☒	☐	☐

Brief Description of Arguments to be Presented:

Claim 1 requires

"applying one or more of the set of global rules to said lead, including applying a routing rule to said lead such that a first user is selected..."

as well as

"applying one of more of a first set of rules which are associated with the selected first user to the first lead, including applying a routing rule to said lead such that a second user is selected"

Anderson appears to disclose

"information specifying a set of preferences which correspond to a type of customer the agent would like to solicit"

1. The applicant seeks clarification of how Anderson discloses or suggests both "global rules" as well as "distinct sets of rules associated with each of said users".

2. The office action recognizes that "Anderson et al does not explicitly teach applying a routing rule such that a second user is selected". The applicant also seeks clarification of how Anderson suggests the recited "applying ... rules associated with the selected first user ... such that a second user is selected."

An interview was conducted on the above-identified application on March 4, 2004

NOTE:
This form should be completed by applicant and submitted to the examiner in advance of the interview (see MPEP § 713.01).
This application will not be delayed from issue because of applicant 's failure to submit a written record of this interview. Therefore, applicant is advised to file a statement of the substance of this interview (37 CPR 1.133(b)) as soon as possible.
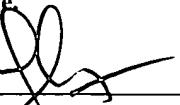
_____   _____
(Applicant/Applicant's Representative Signature)   (Examiner/SPE Signature)